

Poems of Early Indiana in Abraham Lincoln's Own Words

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Battle Ground, Indiana

Designed for 4th Graders

Prepared for the Indiana Humanities Council
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Description:

This lesson plan relates to Indiana history at fourth grade and the Lincolns as a typical pioneer family in the beginnings of the early statehood time. The students will study Lincoln's "Word Choice" and the facts and emotions he expresses in his poems, *My Childhood's Home* and *The Bear Hunt*.

Even though Abraham Lincoln wrote these poems in 1844, 14 years after he had left Indiana and when he was no longer a youngster, they are about his home and the pioneer Indiana where he grew up.

The first poem, *My Childhood's Home*, talks about his growing up on the frontier. Studying it we will find out about the early frontier times through Lincoln's own words. The second one we'll study is *The Bear Hunt*. It is a very funny poem describing an exciting day of a bear hunt.

Even though this lesson has a Language Arts focus the students will gain an insight into the emotions Abraham Lincoln expresses in his poems about the Indiana where he grew up.

Objectives:

1. Students will explore the childhood of Lincoln and pioneer life in early Indiana.
2. Students will respond to literature in writing.
3. Students will write in the style of historical fiction.
4. Students will identify Lincoln as a writer.
5. Students will explore samples of Lincoln's writing.
6. Students will explore how the pioneer community in Indiana influenced Lincoln.

Academic Standards

Social Studies Standards Covered:

- 4.1.6 Explain how key individuals and events influenced the early growth of the new state of Indiana.
- 4.3.8 . . . identify ways in which settlers have changed the landscape of Indiana over the past two hundred years.
- 4.5.1 Identify ways that social groups influence individual behavior and responsibilities.
Example: When people belong to a group they usually interact with each other frequently and follow the rules of the group.
- 4.5.2 Identify the different types of social groups to which people belong and the functions these groups perform.
Example: Social groups may have social, religious, recreational, cultural, educational, service, civic, political, or other functions.

Language Arts Standards Covered:

- 4.1.1 Read aloud grade-level-appropriate literary and informational texts with fluency and accuracy and with appropriate timing, changes in voice, and expression.
- 4.1.7 Use context to determine the meaning of unknown words.
- 4.3.5 Define figurative language, such as similes, metaphors, hyperbole, or personification, and identify its use in literary works.
- Simile: a comparison that uses like or as
 - Metaphor: an implied comparison
 - Hyperbole: an exaggeration for effect
 - Personification: a description that represents a thing as a person
- 4.5.2 Write responses to literature that:
- demonstrate an understanding of a literary work.
 - support statements with evidence from the text.

Objectives and Lesson Focus:

- The student will *analyze* Lincoln's *Word Choice* and deepen an understanding of the vocabulary he uses to convey his emotions.
- The student will find the words that rhyme and *name* the rhyming pattern.
- Using a T-Chart, the poem on one side and comments on the other, the students will *write* a comment for each stanza about its meaning. (Even though some stanzas may be easier for fourth graders to grasp an idea or emotions, the experience will give the student practice thinking about the language of poetry and in particular Lincoln's writing.)
- The student will *classify* examples of figurative writing: simile, metaphor, hyperbole, onomatopoeia, personification.
- The student will *choose* a stanza to *read* for a choral reading.
- The student will *practice* reading his/her stanza for fluency and *perform* it.

Introduction and Setting the Stage:

The following books could also be a related connection with this time period and tell a wonderful story of pioneers and/or a bear hunt:

- *The Bears of Blue River* by Charles Major
- *Log Cabin in the Woods* by Joanne Landers Henry (there's a bear hunt chapter)
- *The Biggest Bear* by Lynd Ward
- "Two Big Bears" by Laura Ingalls Wilder (chapter in *Little House in the Big Woods*)
- Scott Russell Sanders books: *The Floating House*, *Aurora Means Dawn*, *Warm as Wool*, *Here Comes the Mystery Man*
- *Lincoln: A Photobiography* by Russell Freedman
- *Abe Lincoln Grows Up* by Carl Sandburg
- *Young Abe Lincoln: His Teenage Years in Indiana* by W. Fred Conway
- *Abe Lincoln: The Boy Who Loved Books* by Kay Winters and Nancy Carpenter
- *The Abraham Lincoln You Never Knew* by James Lincoln Collier
- *Young Abe Lincoln: The Frontier Days, 1809 - 1837* by Cheryl Harness
- *Just a Few Words, Mr. Lincoln* by Jean Fritz
- *Abraham Lincoln: The Boy, the Man* by Lloyd Ostendorf
- *If You Grew Up with Abraham Lincoln* by Ann McGovern

After reading *Log Cabin in the Woods* and/or the chapter on the "Bear Hunt," the student will study Abraham Lincoln's poem of the same idea. The lesson, emphasizing the trait of "word choice," will give the student the opportunity to "connect emotionally" with this famous Indiana pioneer. The words Lincoln chooses express this emotion and memory of his home and hunt.

Instructional Plan

This plan would take up to 5-6 days of mini-lessons of 10-30 minute lessons each. Some mini-lessons could be done in part or in this sequence using part or all of the online student module.

1. Read *Log Cabin in the Woods*, the story of Oliver Johnson, an actual Indiana family in Indianapolis. (This will take several days. Afterwards or during the story make the connection with Pioneer Lincoln through these poems.) Or read any of the Lincoln stories listed above.
2. Teacher reads the Lincoln poems, *My Childhood's Home* and *The Bear Hunt*, connecting Lincoln to this time period. (Or listen to the poems read in the student module.) (1 day)
3. Reread the poems the next day with the students having their own copy printed on a T-Chart. This will allow notes to be recorded. (Use the website again to hear the poem read.) Link to [Childhood Home Response Sheet](#). Link to [Bear Hunt Response Sheet](#). (1 day)
4. The student circles words unknown, or well-suited words to discuss with the class. (The [online student module](#) may be used again. The tab labeled "Word Sleuth" offers vocabulary helps to enhance the understanding of Lincoln's word choice.) (1 day)
5. Note figurative writing: simile, metaphor, hyperbole, personification, and onomatopoeia. Mark these with the students in a variety of colors. Label and discuss the poetic ideas. This is done together teaching the poetic forms (mini-lesson on figurative language). [Poetry vocabulary study cards](#) may be used. (1 day)
6. The student writes a comment or point of each stanza that will be a topic of discussion. (1-2 days)
7. These poems will be read/reread in 10-minute sessions for several days allowing the student time to meditate on the word choices and emotions. (Use the web site to read/reread with the helps and dramatic readings.)
8. Discuss words circled and comments recorded on individual T-Charts. (20 min)
9. Choose stanza to read for fluency and a choral reading of each poem. (5 min)
10. Perform choral reading. (15 min)
11. Highlight favorite stanza and write a reaction to the stanza or the poem/poems as a whole. (1 day)
12. Take the format quiz ("Poetry Wizard" tab) in the online student module or with a printed copy of the quiz. Link to [My Childhood's Home Quiz](#). Link to [The Bear Hunt Quiz](#).

Evaluation:

1. Score at least 7/10 on format quiz.

2. Fluently read a stanza of choice.
3. Write reasonable comments on 20 of the stanzas from either poem.
20/20=A+
4. Write a response with at least 3 details about a stanza or the poem in its entirety

NAME: _____

The Bear Hunt (response sheet)

When Abraham Lincoln visited his old home in Indiana the fall of 1844, he recalled the rough, good times on the frontier and wrote a humorous poem about a boisterous "Bear Hunt" that put the "woods in a roar" with a "merry corps" of hunters; it made the usually quiet and solitary forest "alive with fun."

(from: Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial
http://www.nps.gov/libo/the_bear_hunt3.htm)

A wild-bear chace, didst never see? Then hast thou lived in vain. Thy richest bump of glorious glee, Lies desert in thy brain.	
When first my father settled here, Twas then the frontier line: The panther's scream, filled night with fear And bears preyed on the swine.	
But wo for Bruin's short lived fun, When rose the squealing cry; Now man and horse, with dog and gun, For vengeance, at him fly.	
A sound of danger strikes his ear; He gives the breeze a snuff: Away he bounds, with little fear, And seeks the tangled rough.	
On press his foes, and reach the ground, Where's left his half munched meal; The dogs, in circles, scent around, And find his fresh made trail.	
With instant cry, away they dash, And men as fast pursue; O'er logs they leap, through water splash, And shout the brisk halloo.	

<p>Now to elude the eager pack, Bear shuns the open ground; Th[r]ough matted vines, he shapes his track And runs it, round and round.</p>	
<p>The tall fleet cur, with deep-mouthed voice, Now speeds him, as the wind; While half-grown pup, and short-legged fice, Are yelping far behind.</p>	
<p>And fresh recruits are dropping in To join the merry corps: With yelp and yell, a mingled din-- The woods are in a roar.</p>	
<p>And round, and round the chace now goes, The world's alive with fun; Nick Carter's horse, his rider throws, And more, Hill drops his gun.</p>	
<p>Now sorely pressed, bear glances back, And lolls his tired tongue; When as, to force him from his track, An ambush on him sprung.</p>	
<p>Across the glade he sweeps for flight, And fully is in view. The dogs, new-fired, by the sight, Their cry, and speed renew.</p>	
<p>The foremost ones, now reach his rear, He turns, they dash away; And circling now, the wrathful bear, They have him full at bay.</p>	
<p>At top of speed, the horse-men come, All screaming in a row. "Whoop! Take him Tiger, Seize him Drum." Bang--bang--the rifles go.</p>	

<p>And furious now, the dogs he tears, And crushes in his ire. Wheels right and left, and upward rears, With eyes of burning fire.</p>	
<p>But leaden death is at his heart, Vain all the strength he plies. And, spouting blood from every part, He reels, and sinks, and dies.</p>	
<p>And now a dinsome clamor rose, 'Bout who should have his skin; Who first draws blood, each hunter knows, This prize must always win.</p>	
<p>But who did this, and how to trace What's true from what's a lie, Like lawyers, in a murder case They stoutly argufy.</p>	
<p>Aforesaid fice, of blustering mood, Behind, and quite forgot. Just now emerging from the wood, Arrives upon the spot.</p>	
<p>With grinning teeth, and up-turned hair-- Brim full of spunk and wrath, He growls, and seizes on dead bear, And shakes for life and death.</p>	
<p>And swells as if his skin would tear, And growls and shakes again; And swears, as plain as dog can swear, That he has won the skin.</p>	
<p>Conceited whelp! we laugh at thee-- Nor mind, that not a few Of pompous, two-legged dogs there be, Conceited quite as you.</p>	

NAME: _____

My Childhood's Home (response sheet)

"In the fall of 1844 (1844-1809=35 years old) I went into the neighborhood in that state in which I was raised, where my mother and only sister were buried, and from which I had been absent about fifteen years. That part of the country is, within itself, as unpoetical as any spot of the earth; but still, seeing it and its objects and inhabitants aroused feelings in me which were certainly poetry; though whether my expression of those feelings is poetry is quite another question." -- A. Lincoln

(Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial

http://www.nps.gov/libo/my_childhood_home3.htm)

My childhood's home I see again. And sadden with the view; And still, as memory crowds my brain. There's pleasure in it too.	
O Memory! thou midway world 'Twixt earth and paradise, Where things decayed and loved ones lost In dreamy shadows rise.	
And, freed from all that's earthly vile. Seem hallowed, pure, and bright. Like scenes in some enchanted isle All bathed in liquid light.	
As dusky mountains please the eye When twilight chases day; As bugle-notes that, passing by, In distance die away;	
As leaving some grand waterfall. We, lingering, list its roar-- So memory will hallow all We've known, but know no more.	

Near twenty years have passed away Since here I bid farewell To woods and fields. and scenes of play, And playmates loved so well.	
Where many were, but few remain Of old familiar things; But seeing them, to mind again The lost and absent brings.	

<p>The friends I left that parting day, tho' changed, as time has sped Young childhood grown, strong manhood gray. And half of all are dead.</p>	
<p>I hear the loved survivors tell How nought from death could save. Till every sound appears a knell, And every spot a grave.</p>	
<p>I range the fields with pensive tread. And pace the hollow rooms. And feel (companion of the dead) I'm living in the tombs.</p>	
<p>And now away to seek some scene Less painful than the last-- With less of horror mingled in The present and the past.</p>	
<p>The very spot where grew the bread That formed my bones. I see. How strange, old field. on thee to tread. And feel I'm part of thee!</p>	

The Bear Hunt

1. What is the rhyming pattern of these four lines?

When first my father settled here,
Twas then the frontier line:
The panther's scream, filled night with fear
And bears preyed on the swine.

- A. a b a b
- B. a b c b
- C. a b c d

Feedback:

A. Very good! The last word on the first and third lines and the last word on the second and fourth lines rhyme. This creates an "a b a b" pattern.
B. Not quite. This would mean that the last word on the second and fourth lines rhymes, but that no other lines rhyme in the stanza. Try again.
C. No. This would mean that there are no rhyming words in this stanza. Try again.

2. How many stanzas does The Bear Hunt have?

- A. 44 stanzas
- B. 88 stanzas
- C. 22 stanzas

3. *Now speeds him as the wind* in stanza 8 is talking about how fast the dog is chasing the bear. This is an example of figurative language called

_____.

a: personification, b: simile, c: metaphor, d: hyperbole e: onomatopoeia

4. The following line is an example of what kind of figurative speech?
Bang--bang--the rifles go.

a: personification, b: simile, c: metaphor, d: hyperbole e: onomatopoeia

5. The following line is an example of what kind of figurative speech?
With eyes of burning fire.

a: personification, b: simile, c: metaphor, d: hyperbole e: onomatopoeia

6. The following line is an example of what kind of figurative speech
Like lawyers, in a murder case
They stoutly argufy.

a: personification, b: simile, c: metaphor, d: hyperbole e. onomatopoeia

7. Lincoln uses several words for dogs in his poem. What are they?

- a. pup and panther
- b. cur and fice
- c. Tiger and Bruin
- d. yelp and growl

No, a *pup* is a dog, but a *panther* is a type of cat

Yes that's right!, cur and fice are words Lincoln uses as synonyms for dogs.

Tiger is a dog, but Bruin is the name of a bear.

No, these are 'sounds' a dog makes

8. What is the tone of Lincoln's Bear Hunt?

- a. scary
- b. sad
- c. angry
- d. comical

When a bear is shot who wins the prize bear skin?

- a, who first draws blood
- b. the first one there
- c. the biggest dog
- d, they flip a coin

The Bear Hunt is a narrative poem. What is a narrative poem?

- a. It's a poem that funny.
- b. It's a poem that tells a story.
- c. It's a poem that has 4 lines per stanza.
- d. It's a poem that rhymes.